Handout for: Using the Review Criteria to Inform your Writing

Why should you consider the Review Criteria when assembling your application?

1. It is the easiest way to ensure your application meets the goals of the program.
2. Review Criteria can provide a source of content, structure, and language for your proposal (examples on back of paper).
3. Review Criteria can provide focus for your writing process.
4. Clearly and plainly addressing the Review Criteria will help your reviewer evaluate your application.

Where can you find the Review Criteria and how are they used to score my application?

- NIH Review Criteria are in Section V of the program announcement. Private fellowships vary.
- There are five scored NIH criteria (table). Each of the five is composed of multiple questions (not shown here for space). Analogous criteria for private fellowships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NRSA Fellowship (e.g. F30, F31, F32)</th>
<th>K award (e.g. K99/R00)</th>
<th>American Heart Assoc. PostDoc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship Applicant</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Potential</td>
<td>Career Development Plan/Career Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>#1: Trainee and Career Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Training Plan</td>
<td>Research Plan</td>
<td>#2: Evaluation of the Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants</td>
<td>Mentor(s), Co-Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)</td>
<td>#3: Sponsor/Training Plan and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Environment &amp; Commitment to Training</td>
<td>Environment &amp; Institutional Commitment to the Candidate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Your overall impact score will be a composite of these criteria, and additional unscored criteria (specific to your application).

How might you use the Review Criteria to inform your writing?

- Each review criterion needs to be clearly addressed, in multiple locations/documents. Addressing a criterion in only one place is usually insufficient.
- Think critically about each specific review criterion, and consider how that criterion can affect the content, structure, and language of your application.
- The back of this sheet has three examples that illustrate how you can incorporate the F31 Review Criteria into your F31 application (similar criteria exist in F32, K99, and other fellowships and awards).

Additional Information: Videos on the Grant Writing Academy’s website (http://grantwriting.stanford.edu/):
**Example #1: How Review Criteria can affect content**

One of the criteria listed under *Sponsors, Collaborators, and Consultants* in the F31 is “Are the qualifications of any collaborator(s) and/or consultant(s), including their complementary expertise and previous experience in fostering the training of fellows, appropriate for the proposed project?”

Let’s say you’ve identified Dr. X to help you learn topic Y for your project. Dr. X is not your advisor. In light of the above criterion, how might you incorporate this into your application?

Here are three places you might want to address this criterion:

1. Get a “Letter of Support/Collaboration” from Dr. X. Ensure the letter clearly describes how she is well qualified to instruct you in Y, how she has instructed others in Y.
2. In your “Research Strategy” you could insert a statement like “As I execute this subaim I will benefit considerably from ongoing interactions with Dr. X, a renowned expert in Y.”
3. In your “Training Plan” add a sentence such as “To facilitate learning of Y, I will apprentice with Dr. X and members of her lab. She has an extensive training history of other PhDs/PostDocs.”

Addressing any one of these is good. Including all three (or more) integrates Dr. X (and your learning of Y) into your proposal and tells a consistent story.

**Example #2: How Review Criteria can affect structure**

Under the criteria *Institutional Environment & Commitment to Training* the reviewer is asked: “Are the research facilities, resources (e.g., equipment, laboratory space, computer time, subject populations), and training opportunities (e.g. seminars, workshops, professional development opportunities) adequate and appropriate?”

You could use this criterion to set up the structure of your “Facilities and Other Resources” document, using bold subject headers for each of “research facilities”, “resources”, and “training opportunities”. This makes the information easier for the reviewer to find.

**Example #3: How Review Criteria can affect language**

A question under the criterion *Fellowship Applicant* is “Does the applicant demonstrate commitment to a research career in the future?”

You can use the language of this question in your application. For example, at an appropriate place in the “Goals for Fellowship Training” document you could include a sentence like: “My ongoing participation in these activities demonstrates my commitment to my future career in research.” Similarly in the “Applicant’s Background” you could finish a paragraph with “... and because of these experiences I am committed to a research career.” The parallels in language (underlined) will help the reviewer identify areas of your proposal that address the criteria.